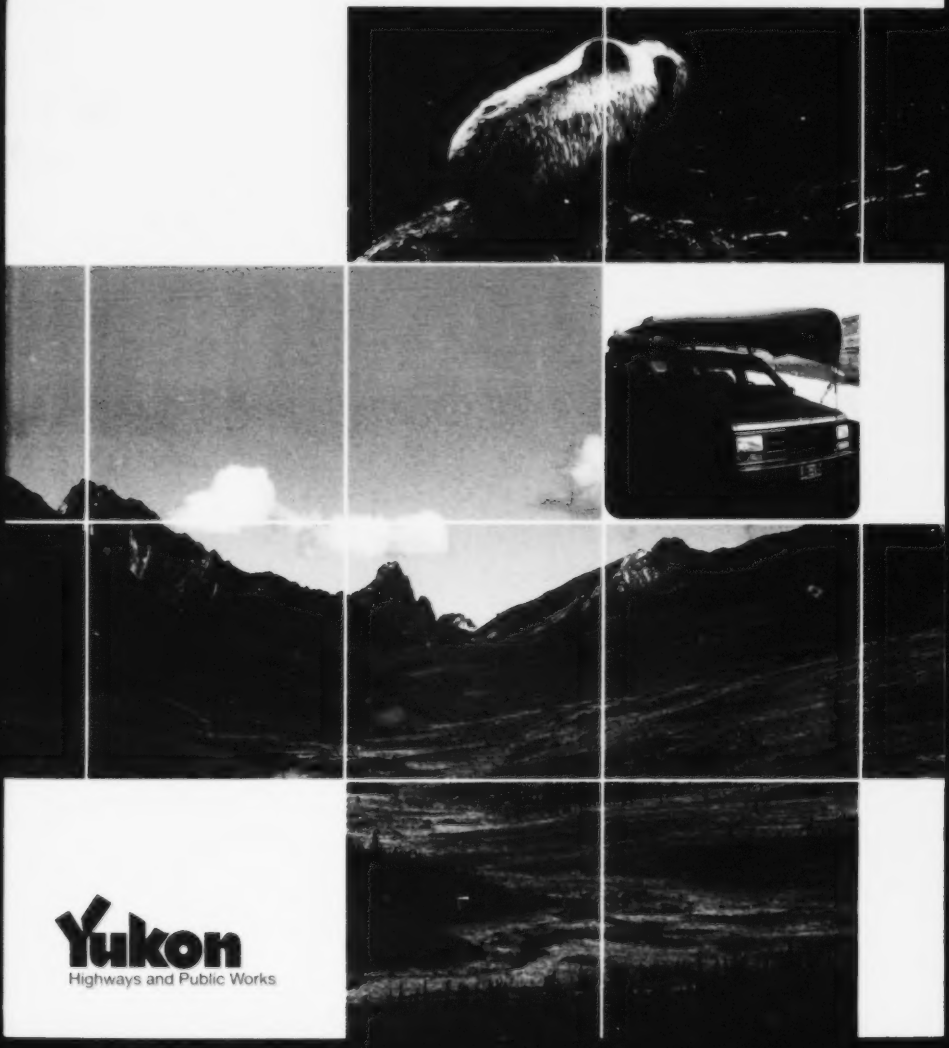
Yukon Highway Travel Guide



Yukon
Highways and Public Works

Old Crow
Inuvik
Ft. McPherson
Eagle Plains
Chicken
YUKON
NWT
Tok
Dawson City
Mayo
Elsa
Stewart Crossing
Keno City
ALASKA
Pelly Crossing
Beaver Creek
Carmacks
Burwash Landing
Faro
Destruction Bay
Ross River
Champagne
Haines Junction
Whitehorse
Tagish
Carcross
Johnsons Crossing
Jake's Corner
Teslin
Skagway
Haines
Atlin
Rancheria
Upper Liard
Watson Lake
Swift River
Juneau
Liard Hot Springs

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Planning a visit to the Yukon?

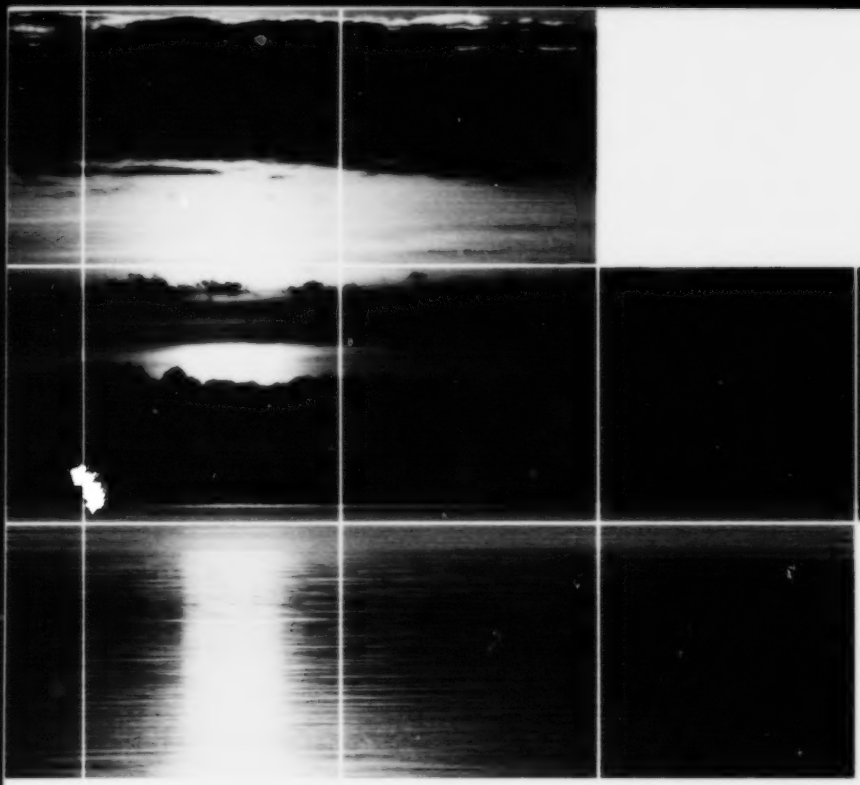
Here are some tips to help you enjoy your trip

The Yukon Territory is a spectacular region in northwestern Canada with beautiful vistas and sights around every corner. From wildlife on mountainsides, in fields or by the side of the road to snow-capped peaks and inviting lakes that go on forever, the Yukon's more than 4,600 kilometres (about 2,854 miles) of road will help you see it all.

Dotted along our highways and byways are the Yukon cities, communities and hamlets that make up the rich diversity, culture and essence of our territory.

Whether you are motoring between communities for business or pleasure, or mapping out a route for a great driving holiday adventure, you should take time to prepare for your travels so that you will enjoy the experience to the fullest.

This booklet offers safety tips and helpful hints to make your Yukon driving experience a safe and pleasant one—all year round!



Summer travel

The Yukon is a popular summer destination for vacationers, foreign visitors and motorists who enjoy spectacular scenery, wildlife and the marvellous Gold Rush history of this corner of North America.

Many Yukoners also eagerly look forward to the spring and summer to head out to cabins and favourite recreation areas.

As the roads become busier and the days longer, summer travellers should be well equipped for longer drives and mindful of others who are also heading out to enjoy the season. While the Yukon's main roads and many of the secondary routes are paved and maintained, travellers planning to head off the beaten track or up to the Arctic Circle should pay particular attention to vehicle preparations.

A little advance preparation will go a long way towards ensuring you have a safe and memorable holiday wherever it takes you in the Yukon.

The Yukon is a very large territory. In many instances, communities are far apart, so road help could be some distance from the location of a vehicle breakdown. Here are a few things you should do to prepare your vehicle for a summer trip.

Check your vehicle thoroughly with particular attention to:

- **Tires** – All of your tires, including the spare tire, should have plenty of original tread and no bald spots. Make sure each tire is inflated to the same pressure, as well as balanced and aligned. You should also ensure you have all of the tire-changing tools for your vehicle as well as a good-quality spare tire. Inspect your tires carefully and check for damage and wear. Replace tires with bumps, bulges, deep cuts and exposed cord.

  If you plan to travel for long distances and through unpopulated areas, invest in a full-sized spare tire. The small spare tires that come with many vehicles are not meant to travel for more than about 80 kilometres (approximately 50 miles) or at highway speeds.

  Attention to your tires will help with fuel consumption and vehicle handling in addition to being a key aid if you need to stop quickly or you start to slide. Tires are safety devices, and the state of your vehicle's tires will affect how you stop in various road conditions.

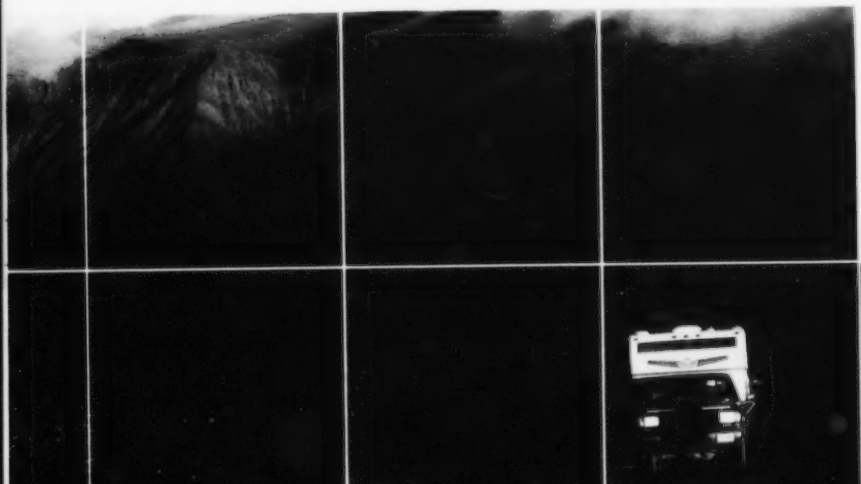
  If you are planning to travel the spectacular Dempster Highway to the Arctic Circle or on to Inuvik on the MacKenzie Delta, pay particular

attention to your tires. The Dempster Highway is a year-round road, but it can be rugged and unforgiving in some sections. Asphalt- and pavement-grade tires (commonly known as four-ply) and tires with worn tread will not withstand the rigours of the Dempster Highway. Motorists planning to travel the route should invest in six- or eight-ply tires.

RV drivers should keep their vehicle weight down by emptying their grey water before travelling the highway and taking only the water they will need. Unnecessary extra weight is hard on the tires and reduces fuel efficiency.

- **Fluids** – Keeping your vehicle's fluids at the recommended levels will help maintain your engine's performance, especially during hot weather. Make sure your coolant is topped up, your radiator is working properly and all hoses and belts are in good repair. Although most service centres check fluid levels as part of regular service, you may wish to also check your break, transmission and battery fluids before you leave on a long drive.

  Roadwork takes place across the Yukon during the spring and summer season, so it's also important to fill up your windshield washer fluid and replace windshield wipers that streak the windshield. Keeping your windshield free of dust, dirt and summer bugs will help you enjoy a safer and more scenic drive.



- **Lights** – Walk around your vehicle, and inspect and test all of your lights. Ensure your light covers are intact, and replace any broken or burned-out bulbs. If light covers become covered with dirt as you travel, ensure you clean them so that your lights will operate and be seen as intended. Seeing and being seen are critical to road safety, particularly in situations with reduced visibility.

  The use of daytime running lights (lower-powered headlights) is required in the Yukon. Since late 1989, vehicles produced in Canada are equipped with daytime lights, but many US-produced vehicles are not. If your vehicle is not equipped with daytime lights, be sure to activate your headlights while driving in the territory. It's the law.

- **Supplies** – It's a good idea to carry a few spare supplies such as your vehicle's type of oil, coolant, window cleaner and other fluids in the event vehicle levels decline unexpectedly. A useful vehicle kit should also contain a flashlight, paper towels, fresh drinking water, a blanket and a first aid kit. You may want to prepare your own kit or consider one of the professionally assembled units as a helpful addition to your vehicle, regardless of your travel plans.

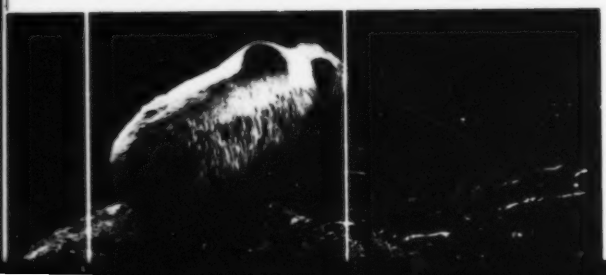
- **Secure loads** – Many summer visitors and local residents travel the territory with boats, camping gear and assorted sporting supplies. If you're loading up all of your gear, ensure nothing blocks your view and take extra care to carefully secure and tie down everything in your load. You won't want to lose your recreation or camping supplies, and anything that comes loose could seriously harm another vehicle.

- **Passing vehicles** – If you see something you'd like to enjoy a little longer, if you're having trouble finding a turnoff or location, or if you feel like taking it a little more slowly, pull safely off the road and let other vehicles continue on. Be mindful of vehicles bunching up behind you and take a moment to let them pass. You will reduce your progress to your destination only by moments, and you will help prevent drivers behind you from taking risks to pass your vehicle. Having consideration for other motorists will make the summer driving experience more enjoyable and safer for everyone.

- **Fatigue** – Every year, lives are lost when motorists fall asleep at the wheel. If you have been driving for an extended period, which is easy to do in the north because of the long hours of daylight (almost 24 hours in some northern locations), stop and take a break. A beautiful warm day, a vehicle that's toasty warm, a nice big lunch or many hours of driving can all contribute to your becoming drowsy behind the wheel. If you are able, switch drivers often to reduce the risk of fatigue. Be alert and stop for a rest if you feel drowsy or increasingly tired.

- **Seat belts** – Seat belt use is mandatory in the Yukon, so be sure you and all of the people in your vehicle buckle up. The proper use of seat belts and child car seats is the single most effective way to reduce vehicle-related injuries and fatalities. Yukon Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) conduct random road checks to check on seatbelt use, so obey the law and have a safe journey.

- **Impaired driving** – Yukon police are also on the lookout for motorists impaired by alcohol, drugs or fatigue. If a police officer believes a driver is impaired by alcohol or drugs, the officer may do one or all of the following:
    - Impound a vehicle for 30 or 60 days, perhaps even longer if the driver has a prior conviction for an alcohol-related driving offence.
    - Suspend and confiscate the driver's licence for 24 hours.
    - Suspend and confiscate the driver's licence for 90 days.
    - Charge the driver with the crime of impaired driving. Visitors are treated with respect and due process, but there is no special dispensation for visitors to the territory.



Road construction

The Yukon's winter weather can be very hard on roads and highways. The spring and summer seasons are short in the Yukon, so road crews have a limited time to maintain and upgrade roads and highways. While routes are passable and summer travel is eagerly encouraged, motorists may experience periodic and intermittent delays in some locations.

Before heading out each day, you can check the regularly updated road reports by calling 867-456-7623 or, toll free in the Yukon, 1-877-456-7623. These reports include updated information on construction areas, locations where you may experience delays and the general condition of most main roads. Reports are also available on the Internet at www.gov.yk.ca/roadreport/.

It's important to use great care when travelling through a construction zone. Here are helpful tips to remember:

- Slow down and obey all flag persons and traffic personnel. Traffic control staff and flag persons are on construction sites to help provide a safe environment for both the on-site workers and the travelling public.
- If you encounter a gravel section of road, slow down. Travelling too quickly through a gravel zone can cause you to lose control of your vehicle, and it can throw up rocks and dust that can seriously impair visibility, harm your vehicle and damage other vehicles on the road.

Winter driving

Winter can be a very beautiful but harsh time in the north. Weather across the north can change unexpectedly and dramatically.

Winter is by far the hardest season on your vehicle, so fall investments in care and maintenance may help you avoid substantial winter repair bills later on. Be sure your vehicle is in good repair before setting out on a winter journey.

Drivers should also take a few minutes to check the weather forecast and road conditions through the Department of Highways and Public Works' road report. (Contact information is provided at the end of this booklet.)

Department of Highways and Public Works staff vigilantly maintain most Yukon roads, but the weather can change suddenly, creating difficult and, at times, very hazardous conditions.

It is always important to match your speed to the road conditions and to remember that posted speed limits are for driving under optimum conditions. Yukon weather can be highly changeable and appear to move through all four seasons within one day! Adjusting your driving speed to the road and weather conditions will help maintain your safety.

Here are a few winter tips to help you have a safer winter journey:

- Ensure your vehicle is in top condition for winter. A good maintenance check will provide you with a level of assurance that your vehicle will start and run when you need it.
- Cold weather thickens most lubricants, so take care to ensure your vehicle's liquids are rated for winter use and maintained at the recommended level.
- Make sure your:
  - Battery is strong.
  - Visibility and signal lights are all operating and their covers are clear and unbroken.
  - Heater and defroster are working well.
  - Oil and antifreeze are tested and have the appropriate rating for the season.
  - Windshield washer fluid is rated to -40° or lower.
- **Tires** – Good tires are critical to safe winter driving. Your vehicle's traction with the road will determine how your car handles, stops, starts, turns or skids.

  Air pressure decreases in colder weather, so check your tires and make sure they are inflated to the recommended level. All of your tires should have the same tread pattern for maximum traction.

  If you travel in areas with a great deal of snow, you may want to consider a different type of all-season or winter tire versus the kind you might want to have for predominantly icy or wet conditions. A tire specialist can advise you on the appropriate tires for your specific vehicle and typical driving conditions.
- **Windshields and wipers** – Driving during snowy conditions can be extremely difficult and even more so if snow or ice accumulates on your windshield. Before you drive, make sure you clean all the snow off your

vehicle so it doesn't cover the headlights, accumulate around the windshield as you drive, or fly onto vehicles following behind.

It's also important to wait until your defrost system heats up so that it can clear your windows of ice and fog as well as help keep them clear as you start your drive.

Ensure your windshield washer fluid is topped up and rated to at least -40°. Most washer fluids do not melt heavy ice, although some brands will aid in the melting process.

If your windshield becomes too clogged with ice or snow, or road visibility declines, carefully pull over in a safe location as soon as you can. Proceed only when visibility improves and you can see the road and other vehicles clearly.

- **Driver preparation** – The key to a safe trip during the winter is preparation—taking the necessary time to get to your destination and, if conditions are poor, assessing frankly whether the journey is truly necessary.

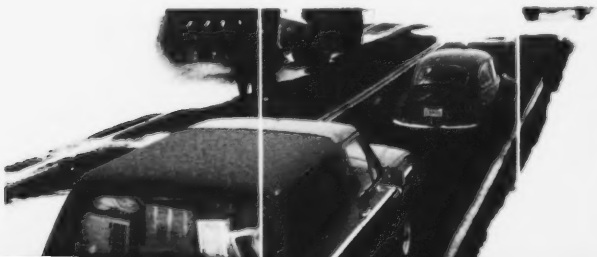
  Road and driving conditions can change very quickly in the Yukon. In addition, what may look like a clear road can in fact be a surface inconspicuously dotted with black ice.

  Sudden and heavy snow, freezing rain, ice fog, winds and severe temperatures are all changes northern drivers can face during the course of a winter journey.

Check the weather report and road conditions before you depart, ensure you have plenty of fuel in your vehicle and plan your travel with safety in mind. Let someone know your travel plans, including your destination, intended route and projected arrival time.

The Canadian Automobile Association recommends you keep the following items in the trunk of your car for winter travel.

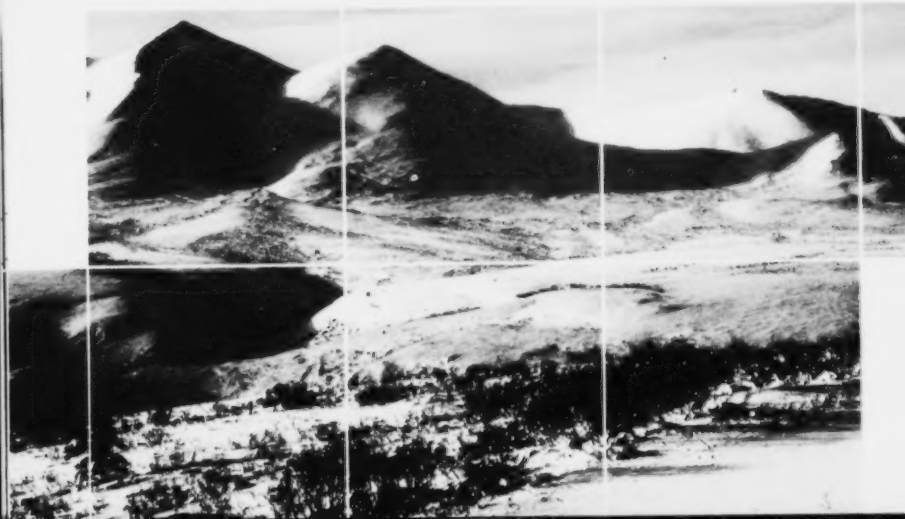
- shovel
- sand, salt or kitty litter
- traction mats
- tow chain or sturdy rope
- compass
- cloth or roll of paper towels
- warning light or road flares
- extra clothing and footwear
- emergency food pack
- axe or hatchet
- booster cables
- roll of duct tape to repair hose leaks and assorted other problems
- selection of small tools such as pliers, a multi-head screwdriver, a wrench or two etc.
- ice scraper and brush
- matches and a survival candle in a deep can to warm hands, heat a drink or use as an emergency light
- fire extinguisher
- methyl hydrate for fuel line and windshield de-icing



You should consider keeping these items in the cab of your vehicle:

- road maps
- flashlight
- first aid kit
- coins for public phones
- blanket (special survival blankets are best)
- any medications you take regularly during the day
- if your vehicle has power locks and windows, a small hammer. (If your car looses power with the doors and windows closed and locked, you won't be able to get out. Using extreme care, you may need to break a window to exit the vehicle in an emergency situation.)

- **If you are stuck or stranded** – The Canadian Automobile Association and federal emergency agencies offer the following advice if you are caught in a storm or stuck in the snow:
  - Don't panic. Stay in your car so that you have shelter and don't become lost. Avoid overexertion and panic and wait for help to arrive.
  - If you attempt to free your vehicle from the snow, dress warmly and take particular care to shovel slowly. Try to keep as dry as possible. Wet clothing from weather or perspiration can dramatically reduce your body temperature. Shovelling and bitter cold can kill, so be very careful how you attempt to free your vehicle body temperature. Shovelling and bitter cold can kill, so be very careful how you attempt to free your vehicle.



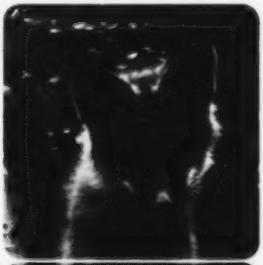
- Keep fresh air in your vehicle by opening a window on the side sheltered from the wind. Run your motor sparingly, but before you do, ensure the vehicle's exhaust pipe is not blocked by snow or any obstruction. If you run your vehicle often, lethal exhaust fumes (carbon monoxide) may accumulate, so take particular care with the use of the engine and ensure the tail pipe has not become blocked by drifting snow.
- If possible, use an emergency candle for heat instead of the vehicle heater. To help stay warm, put on a hat. An estimated 60 percent of our body heat is lost through our heads.
- Set out a warning light or flares and use the interior car lights rather than the headlights. Overuse of the headlights may run down your battery.
- Exercise your limbs vigorously, try to keep moving, and keep an eye out for traffic or searchers. Try to stay awake. If you fall asleep, your body temperature will decline and you may place yourself at increased risk from the cold. Try to remain awake as much as possible.

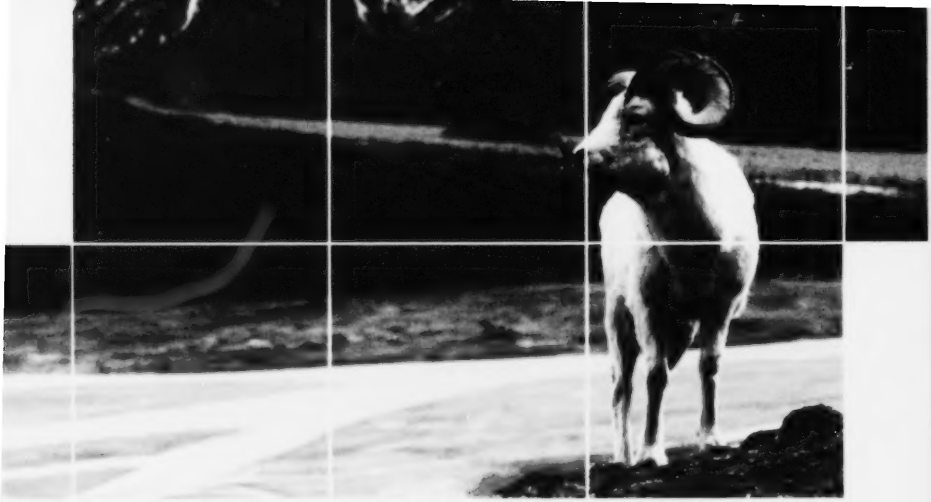
Wildlife

The Yukon's wildlife is wonderful to observe. A small red fox peeking out from the side of the road, a bear roaming through the bush, a ptarmigan blending beautifully with the snow, or a moose browsing in a marshy area are all exciting to see and fascinating to watch, often serving as the highlight of a drive.

If you are particularly eager to see wildlife, the best times during the spring and summer are early in the morning, late evening and through the night. These are also the times when animals tend to be on the road, so it's important to be especially vigilant.

During the winter, with reduced daylight and, at times, visibility, animals can be particularly hard to see. Motorists should take care to reduce their speed on highways and to be especially alert to wildlife. Some drivers may wish to avoid travelling in the dark.





Vehicles and animals can be a very dangerous mix. A collision with an animal can be extremely upsetting as well as damaging. Even small animals can damage a vehicle, while large ones can cause more extensive damage and, in some instances, cause injury or death for motorists as well as the animals.

Here are a few suggestions to help you can maximize your enjoyment of Yukon wildlife while avoiding harm to yourself, your passengers or your vehicle:

- Be particularly careful during the times of day when animals are usually spotted on or close to the road. In spring and summer, early mornings, late evenings and through the night are typical times to see wildlife. In winter, animals can be on the road at any time.
- Watch for roadside signs warning of animals. These notices are posted in areas where wildlife is repeatedly observed near or on the road.
- If you see one animal, chances are there will be others close by. Many animals travel in groups, so watch for animals that may be following. Slow down and pass carefully through the area.
- Some animals may become spooked or frightened if you encounter them on the road. Moose, for example, will tend to stay on the road while running away from your vehicle, which may pose a danger to oncoming or other motorists. If you encounter a moose on the right-of-way, either pull over safely or proceed very slowly until the animal leaves the road.

- If you see wildlife off the road or in the distance that you'd like to view for a little longer, ensure you pull well off to the side of the road in a safe location, or look for a designated rest stop or viewpoint along the route. Enjoy wildlife from a safe distance, and even though they may look appealing, remember that the "wild" in wildlife means unpredictable. Never underestimate an animal. Wildlife can become aggressive and dangerous suddenly, and some animals can move extremely fast.
- Never feed or leave food available for wildlife, as you will endanger yourself and others and, possibly, contribute to the early death of the animal. Wild animals that start to approach people are usually killed accidentally or intentionally. If you come into contact with wildife, be careful.

Cell phones

If you have a cell phone, you should note that service is limited to Whitehorse and its outskirts, so be sure you are well equipped for extended periods of driving between communities and phones.

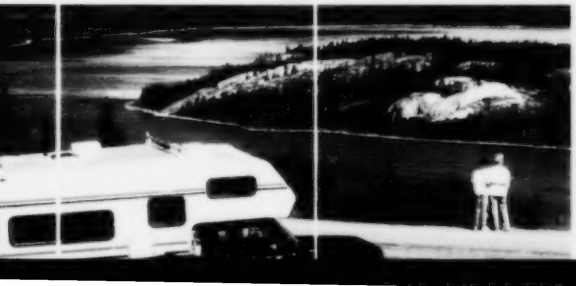
Have a safe journey

The Yukon is a magnificent territory and one that will leave you with memories to last a lifetime. If you decide to drive through this northwestern section of Canada, bring plenty of film, prepare your vehicle and yourself, and have a wonderful, safe journey.

More information

If you would like up-to-date information on Yukon road conditions, visit us on the web at www.gov.yk.ca/roadreport/.

You can also call our pre-recorded phone line at 867-456-7623 or, from within the Yukon, toll free at 1-877-456-7623.



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